

The Topeka State Journal.

10 CENTS A WEEK. NIGHT EDITION. TOPEKA, KANSAS, FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 21, 1894. TWENTY-SECOND YEAR.

DEEPLY SHROUDED.

Little Comes to Light Tending to Show

Who So Brutally Murdered Mrs. A. D. Matson.

Suspicious Directed Toward Her Long Absent Husband.

ARE DISPELLED TODAY

By a Dispatch From San Diego California.

Saying That He Is Now in That City.

PLAUSIBLE THEORIES.

The Terrible Crime Was Undoubtedly Committed

By Some One Familiar With Mrs. Matson's Habits.

The horrible murder of Mrs. A. D. Matson, in her home at the corner of Fifteenth and Monroe streets, an account of which was published in last evening's JOURNAL, is the principal topic on the streets today. The horror that the deed has created in the public mind is intense, and there is a general demand that no time or expense be spared to capture the murderer or murderers and mete out the punishment deserved. An extra edition of the STATE JOURNAL, at 5:30 last evening, gave some later particulars of the crime, that the regular edition did not contain. For those who did not see that edition, we recapitulate the following:

Mrs. A. D. Matson was found dead on the floor of one of the rooms of her house at Fifteenth and Monroe at 3:30 o'clock by Police Officers Charles Lindsay, Tim Donovan, and a JOURNAL reporter.

The body had evidently lain there for at least ten days, as it was stiff and cold, and there had been no life about the house for ten days.

A boy who delivers milk at her house had noticed that the can he left about ten days ago had stayed on the back doorstep and he gave the alarm to the police. The boy was an employee of the John G. Otis dairy.

The house is a two-story stone one and has about ten rooms. It is nicely furnished and had been ransacked from one end to the other.

Mrs. Matson lived there alone. Her husband is in California. She lived in a good deal of seclusion as regards her neighbors who are mostly colored people, and it is not known whether there was any money in the house or not.

She lay in a little back room on her

back and in a pool of her own blood, which had dried.

The milk can covered where it had been left, and STAFF JOURNAL of date ranging to a week ago were strewn about the yard as the carrier had left them. The house was locked and several keys were tried.

As the officers stood at a back window on the porch they could look directly in on the body as it lay on the floor with one foot sticking through a door.

It was covered with clothing and rags and a couple of sacks of sweet potatoes had been placed on her head. She lay in an easy position on her back with her arms at her sides, her head turned to the right, her right limb straight out and the other drawn up a little.

Her clothes were thrown up over her head and clotted blood held them to the floor.

The entire top of her head was crushed in as though she had been struck dead with one fearful blow.

The crime must have been committed very early in the morning or late at night, as the house was entirely locked and yet Mrs. Matson

was fully dressed. Her cloak lay across a chair in the kitchen as though she had just come in and thrown it there.

When the coroner came he uncovered her head. It was then found that an old piece of carpet had been wound around her head three times. This was saturated with blood. When the carpet was removed a horrible sight was revealed. The top of the dead woman's head was crushed and when the carpet was removed it took part of the scalp with it. The skull was crushed almost down to the eyes. An ax stood in one corner of the barren room in which the body lay and it was with this weapon that the murder was probably committed, though there was no blood upon it.

There was only one room in the house that had not been ransacked and this was a large south room up-stairs which had been probably used for a bed room.

In this room evidently nothing had been touched though there was a cheap pocketbook under a cloth on a table which was entirely empty. In the northeast up-stairs room the murderer had evidently expected to find money.

A trunk stood near an old single bed which had been filled with trinkets and small articles, and these were scattered over the floor of the room.

The bed clothes were turned down and had evidently been thoroughly examined.

In the parlor stood a secretary and the contents and letters had been disarranged showing that the miscreant had not neglected anything. They probably found money and this accounts for the fact that the large spare bedroom upstairs had not been molested.

The neighbors in the vicinity are all colored, and they say that they have not seen Mrs. Matson for two weeks. Mrs. Robinson, who lives across the street says that she saw Mrs. Matson about two weeks ago and she was then coming from the direction of her house and she had evidently been collecting rent. She saw no one around the house at any time and never heard any noise or disturbance of any kind there.

Mrs. A. D. Matson was for several years a member of the city board of education from the Fifth ward and took an active interest in the city schools. She was at one time a city teacher and was as well known as any woman in the city. Two years ago, Dr. J. M. Westerfield was elected to succeed her. She was generally supposed to have considerable money and owned five or six houses on the east side. Her husband left her four or five years ago and took up a homestead in California, where he has since lived.

Mrs. Matson was a member of the Topeka Equal Suffrage Association and a prominent suffrage worker.

Mrs. Matson was in the habit of visiting at two places on Monroe street—at the house of Rev. A. Z. Burton at 1301 and L. G. Sain at 1235.

Rev. Mr. Burton said to a JOURNAL reporter: "It has been nearly a month since I saw Mrs. Matson. She generally stopped here on her way home from up town. She was perfectly fearless and would come and go at all times with apparently no thought of danger. She did not make many friends and neither did she have enemies. I do not believe that the murder could have been committed by any one who knew her, for it was generally known that she kept no money

though she might have tried to ward off the blows of the ax.

There were no cuts or bruises on the body and there is no evidence of assault. That theory seems to have been a mistaken one.

The body is still at the undertaking rooms and will be turned over to her relatives when they claim it.

Flavel Downs of Atchison, who is a distant relative has been telegraphed.

A young colored man by the name of Will Robinson who lives across the street has possession of the house today at the dictation of Coroner Bailey.

The coroner's jury visited the house after viewing the remains and spent an hour in looking over old papers and letters.

Mrs. Matson was a very careful business woman and had her letters and papers filed neatly.

There were two letters that may throw some light on the case together with the story of George Knight, the deaf and dumb colored man who says he saw two men enter the house on the night of

December 11 at ten o'clock. Little credence is given however to Knight's story.

The letters are from her husband, Albert Matson, and were written from San Diego, Cal. One was dated November 4 and the other November 7. The second had been written without waiting for an answer from the first.

The tone of the letters would lead one to understand that Matson had left Topeka with some vestige of scandal clinging to him, and that he wished to return. He wrote to ask his wife if she would sign some papers that he could show to some person or persons that would remove from him the evidence of having done anything wrong.

They were business-like letters, with no display of affection and without any feeling but bitterness against his enemies. He wanted his wife to "clear his skirts" of this something that seemed to be against him in Topeka. The letters do not say anything in regard to this something, except in one place, where he says: "I was never jealous of Mrs. S's doctor. I was never in love with any other man's wife. You know I am not that kind of a man. I have not been in love with any bipped very recently. As to Mrs. Mills, a certain young lady's little scheme did not work worth a cent. I received a letter from Mr. Mills recently, in which he said I feel that God has forgiven me and I hope you will. God bless you. Three of you can decide this question, and what you say shall settle what I shall do, and that very soon." There was also a marginal note that read: "I have not the money to pay off the mortgage and I believe I never will." All this was in Matson's handwriting.

Matson left Topeka some eight years ago and he and his wife have not lived together since. It would seem from the letters that he had asked her to sign a denial of his guilt before and she had refused to do so or not answered the letters at all.

There were no threats against Mrs. Matson or any one in the letters and they began "Alameda" and were signed "Albert."

The most unfortunate part of the evidence gathering is that George Knight, the only person that says he saw anything, is deaf and dumb. The only story he can tell is by signs, but he is a good deal of a pantomimist and his brother Will and ex-Constable Jimmie Harlan say they understood him very well. He lives in Tennesseetown but claims he was in the region of the house on the night the murder was probably committed. The substance of his story is this: He was going north on the east side of the house when his attention was attracted to two men, one of whom had got over the fence and was going toward the north window of the house. The man went to the window, peered in and then motioned his friend to follow. The man at the window was tall and wore a long board. The other was shorter and wore a mustache. Both were white men.

Mr. Matson is a tall man and wears a full beard.

Knight told his brother about it but William paid no attention to the story as he thought George had simply seen a fight somewhere and was trying to describe it.

As he pictures it he went to the window and saw the men strike Mrs. Matson and then he ran.

Knight is said by people who know him to be a truthful man. On the other hand several who know Knight say that it is a trick of his to pretend he has witnessed anything that is for the time attracting public attention. His mind is not bright.

So far as known the last person to see Mrs. Matson was a prominent suffrage woman who called on her on the morning of Tuesday, the 11th, to invite her to a meeting of the E. S. A. Mrs. Matson replied that she could not go, as she was expecting to go to Salina in a day or two to see about a corn deal she was having some trouble with there.

The fact that the milk pail was on the back porch as usual Wednesday morning leads one to believe that the crime was committed after supper, as Mrs. Matson seldom put the pail there until about the last thing before retiring. A lamp was sitting on the dining room table as though it had been set there hastily and blown out. The wick was turned far down as though that too had been done hastily.

Mrs. Matson was a highly educated woman, and had many classic works in her library and a full set of the Encyclopedia Britannica. She was a native of Ohio and a graduate of Antioch college at Yellow Springs, in that state. Her maiden name was Doty.

Mr. Matson was known in Kansas as a Congregational preacher. He preached at Brookville in 1875, and Carson, Brown county, in 1889, and subsequently in Dover.

W. C. Gilpatrick, of No. 921 Fillmore street, used to know Matson and "didn't think much of him." His wife, who recently died, and Mrs. Matson were very intimate. He says that Mr. and Mrs. Matson quarrelled over selling the four lots on which Monroe school now stands.

"On one occasion," Mr. Gilpatrick says, "Mrs. Matson asked me if I supposed her husband really was infatuated with another woman. I told her I didn't know. But about a year ago I was in San Diego with my daughter. On Sunday we had an hour to spare before church and we thought we would



MRS. MATSON'S HOUSE—FIFTEENTH STREET SIDE.

go down towards the beach and see how the fishermen lived. We had gone several blocks when we met Matson face to face. There could be no doubt of his identity. He was wheeling a baby carriage. I pretended not to recognize him and I have never mentioned this to a soul except my daughter until now. Of course it may have been somebody else's baby carriage, but it fastened a lasting suspicion in my mind. There was nobody else in sight."

SOME OF THE THEORIES.

Of Those Who Are Working on the Case, Given Below.

There are half a dozen theories and plausible ones regarding the mysterious murder of Mrs. Matson. It should be remembered that her house is in a locality which invites to deeds of violence, being only a short distance from the Missouri Pacific freight depot and a tramp shack. The theory that it is the work of a passing tramp has few adherents. The work appears to have been done by persons familiar with Mrs. Matson's habits and aware of the belief that she kept money in the house.

A theory which seems to be the most reasonable, is that two men went to the house when Mrs. Matson was away, and began a search for the money which was kept at the bottom of a little trunk up stairs. While they were ransacking the house Mrs. Matson approached the kitchen door. The robbers heard her. They stood guard over the door with uplifted axes, and the moment Mrs. Matson entered she was struck dead. All the disarrangement of furniture and articles in the house when it was first entered by officers add strength to this theory. It was there the axe was found. The only place in the house where there were any traces of blood except in the vacant room where the body was found, was by the kitchen door. A JOURNAL reporter found one of

WHAT MISS LOVELL KNOWS.

An Intimate Friend of Mrs. Matson Contributes Information.

Miss Sue L. Lovell of 1125 Harrison street, a teacher in the public schools was one of the most intimate friends of Mrs. Matson. Several times when Mrs. Matson was out of town Miss Lovell attended to her business affairs. She says that besides the property in the vicinity of Walnut Grove, Mrs. Matson owned the larger part of some valuable Lincoln street property. She owned jointly with her husband some farms near Salina. Mr. Matson was her second husband, and she was left by property by her first husband.

It is intimated that Mrs. Matson had a will which ignored her husband in the disposition of her property. It was understood between them that she should leave her property to her relatives, and the husband might bequeath his share of the estate to his relatives.

There is one person in town who claims to know where the will is, and that she "can lay her hands on it" whenever it becomes necessary—unless that document was taken by the murderers.

Miss Lovell had repeatedly cautioned Mrs. Matson regarding her personal affairs. Mrs. Matson never expressed any fears, but gave the names of some "bad men" in the neighborhood whom she said had given her a great deal of trouble as tenants and in other ways.

STILL IN CALIFORNIA.

The State Journal Gives Albert Matson the First News.

This morning the STATE JOURNAL sent a message to San Diego where lives Albert Matson, the husband of the murdered woman. The facts were briefly told and the questions asked: "Is Albert Matson at San Diego and has he been there continuously for several weeks; if not when did he leave California, as he was expected in Topeka about this time?"

The following reply came this afternoon: "Albert Matson is still in this city, but has heard nothing of the murder. We have sent your message to his house, about two miles out. He is a music teacher here."

TO PHOTOGRAPH THE RETINA.

Perhaps the Murderer's Picture May Be Found in Mrs. Matson's Eye.

It was decided this afternoon that eye photography should be resorted to as a possible means of finding a clue to the murderer. Scientists say that when death is met by a murderer, the murderer's features are indelibly transfixed on the victim's eyes after death. In event that Mrs. Matson was struck from behind, this theory will prove useless.

A case is cited in the Associated Press today from Jamestown, N. Y., where a murderer is detected in this way. The dispatch says, in part:

"The existence of the impression of the murderer on the eye was first discovered by means of a powerful microscope. Unfortunately the features of

probably have retired, yet the remains were fully dressed, and her cloak was on a chair, where it had been carelessly tossed.

The most acceptable theory also is that the murderers knew Mrs. Matson's habits. Since the discovery yesterday the JOURNAL has had as many men working as many hours on the case as the police have, and its reporters are not prepared to tell all they know. George Knight, the colored deaf mute, who, by signs, has been trying to show that he had seen two men crawl in the window, lives in Tennesseetown. The question is suggested: What was he doing around the Missouri Pacific junction that time of the night? Had he looked in the window as he claims to have done he could scarcely have failed to have seen the covered remains, for the view from one side of the house to the other was unobstructed, and the moon was at its fullest. However, George Goddard, foreman of the street force, says Knight attempted to tell several men by signs about his knowledge of the affair as early as a week ago, but they understood him to be referring to a fight he had seen somewhere.

The axe with which the murder was committed does not belong to the Matson house. Mrs. Matson had a new axe of her own in the house, which had no blood on it. The bloody axe is an old one made out of a heavy limb of hedge-wood. When the owner of the axe is found, the mystery will be much nearer solution.

Mrs. Matson had pronounced, and eccentric ideas about how affairs of government should be conducted. One of her hobbies was that the county made a great mistake in encouraging pauperism by distributing free food among the poor. She often went to the poor commission-ers and to the Associated Charities and protested against their supplying some of her neighbors whom she said were lazy and able to work if they were disposed to. On one occasion Mrs. Matson expressed slight fears in regard to one colored man especially who is known in that part of town as a tough character.

MRS. J. G. OTIS' SUSPICIONS.

Led to Discovery of the Murder of Mrs. Matson.

It was Mrs. Bina Otis, wife of ex-Congressman John G. Otis, who led to the discovery of the crime. Mrs. Otis was seen by a JOURNAL reporter last night and she said:

"My son Foster delivers milk at Mrs. Matson's house and he told me last Saturday that nobody seemed to be at home. He found the bucket in the same place on the kitchen porch every morning with the milk untouched. I said then I feared something was wrong, and told him to look in the windows and see if there seemed to be anyone at home. He was sensitive about 'prowling around,' as he expressed it, in places where he had no business, and he didn't do so. I kept thinking about it all week and it worried me, so yesterday afternoon I reported it at police headquarters. I felt rather guilty for reporting it, and thought maybe I was meddling in something which did not concern me." Mrs. Otis was not aware of the result of the investigation which she started until a JOURNAL reporter told her.

She was greatly horrified, as might have been expected. She knew Mrs. Matson well.

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HOCH'S POLL.

He Writes Letters to Members of the Legislature.

And Finds That More Are For Major Hudson

FOR STATE PRINTER

Than For Any of the Other Candidates.

So He Suggests That It Be Made Unanimous.

The first intimation of how the legislature will stand on the state printer question has been made public by Editor Ed W. Hoch of the Marion Record who in this week's issue of his paper tells all he knows about the printer situation and then moves that the nomination of Major J. K. Hudson be made unanimous.

Editor Hoch publishes a letter, of which he sent copies to all the members of the legislature in which he said: "My DEAR SIR:—I write you frankly concerning the state printing. As many of my friends know, this is the only office I want, and I want it because I need it. But during the campaign I do not ask a definite expression from you, but if you will frankly indicate your preference I will appreciate it and thank you for it, whether favorable to me or not. If another has a majority preference I will gracefully move to make it unanimous, 'for the good of the order.' 'Shake, anyhow, over the great victory in state and nation.'"

Commenting on the result of the letter he says:

"I have received seventy replies to the ninety-two letters sent out. Of the seventy who have replied, nearly all say they are unpledged; fourteen are for Major J. K. Hudson; many more express themselves as favorable to him; two favor Hon. Ed Greer; two favor Mr. Spangler; six favor Mr. George W. Crane; ten are for me, and seven others express themselves as favorable to me. The others express no choice. It is reasonable to suppose that most of the twenty-two who have not replied are favorable to another."

In conclusion he says:

"I have given twenty years of faithful service to the Republican party. It has cost me ten dollars to every one I ever got out of it. But I do not complain. My Republicanism has no string to it, with an office at the end of the string. Another twenty years, if they shall be mine to give, will just as cheerfully be given to the best party ever organized, and given without money and without price, and without office."

"Again thanking the representatives, one and all, for their kind and courteous replies to my letter, and wishing them a pleasant and harmonious session, I move to carry the nomination of Major J. K. Hudson unanimously." E. W. Hoch.

PEACE.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21.—Minister Denby today cabled the state department that the Chinese have appointed two peace commissioners, Chang Yin Huan and Phao, who will proceed at once on their mission from Peking to the Japanese capital.

BISHOP McNAMARA.

To "Men Only" Tonight. In Hamilton hall gives his second private lecture tonight to men only.

He will give his second private lecture tonight to men only.

RIGBY'S

425 KANSAS AVE

Candies.

We have 25,000 pounds on our counters—to be sold this week. Try a box of our Blue Chocolates.

Fruits.

Sweet Florida Oranges, Grape Fruit, Mandarin and Tangerine Oranges, Mandarins, Peas, Peaches and Bananas.

Nuts.

We have the largest stock of Nuts in the city at the lowest prices.

Christmas Decorations

5000 Yards Wire wound Evergreen.

Crystalized Fruits

Cherries, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Apricots, Pine Apple, Pickles, Tangerine Oranges and Fig.

RIGBY'S.

[Continued on Seventh Page.]